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Photo by PHAN Shannon Garcia



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Tarawa Cleans Ship of "Wogs"



By JO3 Adam Staletton
Photos by PHC(AW/SW) Marvin Harris

EQUATOR - USS Tarawa was just beginning her 2005 mission to the Middle East, and fresh out of her second port call, Darwin, Australia, when she

crossed the equator. While crossing the equator might not seem like a big deal, it's very significant as far as maritime

tradition is concerned, because it marks the moment when a ship rids herself of her pollywogs in what's known as a Wog Day Ceremony. "The tradition goes all the way

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back to the Greeks and the Vikings,” said Lt. Jennifer Mitchell, Wog Day Ceremony Organizer. “Prior to crossing the equator, a sailor is referred to as a ‘pollywog,’ or ‘wog’ for short. Once they go through the ceremony they become ‘shellbacks’.” The ceremony began at 4 AM

as wogs were roused out of their racks to the sounds of whistles, sirens and shouts from shellbacks, who then led them to Tarawa’s flight deck where the events began. “My main concerns were two things, I wanted to make the ceremony fun and enjoyable for the crew and at the same time stay within the policy of the Navy and what the regulations require,” said Mitchell.

“The Navy has a ‘no hazing’ policy and the ship has a ‘no food’ policy.” This is a far cry’s difference from the days of old when

pollywogs were covered with food and sometimes subjected to humiliating tasks. “When I went through it, you had to crawl through a garbage shoot with an egg in your mouth and fish paste under your nose,” said Chief Gunner’s Mate Paul

Crawford, Royal Baby and ceremony participant. “The Navy was going through a transition and trying to do away with the hazing part of it (crossing the line ceremony),

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Photo by PHC(AW/SW) Cindy Harris

L to R, Shellbacks OS2 Trafton and OS2 Furr.



Photos by GySgt James Nutt & PH2 (AW) Larry Carlson.

Sailors and Marine Wogs aboard USS Tarawa transition to Shellbacks during the traditional crossing the Equatorial line ceremony.

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Photo by PH2(AW) Larry Carlson



Photos by - GySgt James Nutt



Marines of the 13th MEU join in the laughs, on wog day and pay homage to Davey Jones, King Neptune, and the Royal Baby, aboard USS TARAWA as they transition into trusty shellbacks.

and at the same time keep some of the traditions.” Once the wogs arrived on the flight deck, they began their right of passage, which included some physical exercises, being sprayed with water, singing songs and finally a visit to the Royal Court. “The Royal Court is made up of four shellbacks playing the roles of Davy Jones, the Royal Baby, the Royal Barber and the most senior shellback assuming the role of King Neptune,” said Mitchell. “I tried to pick people who would really get into character.” “It’s just a fat guy,” said Crawford, when asked about his role as the Royal Baby, following his comment with a hearty laugh.



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"I guess they picked me because I've got a belly."

"I really enjoyed the whole thing," said Seaman Christopher Pence, a pollywog at the start of the day and now a proud shellback. "It was a lot of fun and I'm glad that I participated in this Naval tradition." At day's end, Tarawa now pollywog-free continued her voyage to the Middle East with a full compliment of shellbacks ready for mission accomplishment. "It was a good ceremony that I think the participants really enjoyed and can remember," said Mitchell. "It was clean, nobody got hurt, and everything was done in the right spirit of good natured fun."

USS Tarawa LHA-1 Transits Suez Canal

AT SEA ABOARD USS TARAWA IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA— The sight of Mosques and the lyrical sound of the muezzin's call to prayer were background to the San Diego based amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA-1) as it transited the Suez Canal en route to the Mediterranean coast of Egypt to participate in BRIGHT STAR, the biannual multinational training exercise. East coast based warships most commonly perform the transit of the Suez Canal. The Tarawa, along with the amphibious transport dock ship USS Cleveland (LPD-7), the landing dock ship USS Pearl



Photo by PH2 Brandon Teeple

The USS Tarawa (LHA-1) transits through the Suez Canal, Sept. 9, 2005.

Harbor (LSD-52), the guided-missile frigate USS Ingraham (FFG-61) and their complement of over 4,000 Sailors and Marines of Expeditionary Strike Group One (ESG-1), make this traversing a novel occasion.

Most Sailors didn't expect to transit the canal while stationed aboard Tarawa. "I thought I would had to have been stationed on an east coast

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Photo by LI3(SW) Elena Velazquez

MA2 Robert Pallozzi stands flight deck security patrol as the USS Tarawa completed the north bound passage through the Suez Canal.

ship to go through the Suez. I would say it is close to the top of my list of great experiences during my enlistment,” said

Quartermaster 2nd Class John Sullivan, who is stationed onboard Tarawa. The last time Tarawa completed the north-

bound transit thru the canal was nearly 22 years ago to the day, on Sept. 10th 1983, while in route to Beirut, Lebanon to join the multinational peacekeeping forces there. The canal at times tapers to a minimum of 60 meters in width and runs over 100 miles in length, giving those who transit the canal a close eye view of sights along both banks. “I enjoyed the chance to see all the cities and military guards on either side of the Suez. The best sights to see were the Mosque’s as well,” said Intelligence Specialist 2nd Class Johnathan Johnston, who was on the Snoopy Team watch



Photo by PHAN Shannon Garcia

USS Tarawa (LHA-1) transited the Suez Canal to participate in Exercise Bright Star 2005.

surveying merchant vessel traffic and air contacts for possible threats during Tarawa’s transit. BRIGHT STAR is the largest multi-national exercise of its kind in the world. The exercise is held every two years in Egypt. In addition to Tarawa, the Egyptian navy and marines, maritime forces from various other countries participated in this exercise.

Tarawa Participates in International Exercise Bright Star 2005

By JO3 David Perea

MUBARAK MILITARY CITY, EGYPT – USS Tarawa (LHA-1), along with sixteen thousand boots on the ground, several ships in the sea and the flags of 12 nations flying over Egypt, participated in Bright Star 2005, the largest coalition exercise conducted by U.S. Central Command taking place Sept 10 to Oct. 3. The exercise is designed to strengthen regional stability and improve inter-military cooperation, as well as cooperation among participating nations. “For

the participant, Bright Star provides a good opportunity to get acquainted with each other’s equipment, tactics and training,” said Egyptian Maj. Gen. Ahmed Mokhtar, chief of Egypt’s Armed Forces Exercise Authority, according to Al-Ahram, an Egyptian online weekly publication. Amid the vastness of the biennial multinational exercise, Tarawa, the flagship of Expeditionary Strike Group One (ESG-1), is actively participating projecting its assets to land, sea and air during its participation in the



A Landing Craft Air Cushion from the USS Pearl Harbor (LSD-52) conducts an amphibious landing off the beach of Mubarak Military City Egypt. operation from Sept. 10-28. The striking arm of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (13th MEU) embarked aboard Tarawa, the amphibious assault ship, has worked closely with U.S. and other participating nations’ ground forces in and around Mubarak Military City conducting training exercises, as well as an amphibious landing demonstration staged from Tarawa with deck

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department playing a major role in executing flawless well-deck operations for the Landing Craft Utility (LCU) Boats, and the landing dock ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD-52) Sept. 15.

"I am only a deck seaman, but if it wan't for us launching and bringing in the LCUs, the mission wouldn't get done, so I think everyone of us plays an important role," said Seaman Jennifer Barksdale, who contributed to the operation by launching the LCUs. Warriors from the 13th MEU integrated with Egyptian, Greek, and Jordanian forces for the amphibious landing demonstration while

observed by coalition commanders and honored guests, including the Egyptian Ministry of Defense. In

reference to the amphibious landing demonstration, Rear Admiral Michael LeFever, the Commander of ESG-1, said with Egyptian, Greek, and Jordanian forces for the

piece in the demo today, I think we showed we can effectively work together with coalition forces." Among Tarawa and Pearl Harbor, the four-ship team

based out of the west coast in the strike group includes the amphibious transport dock ship USS Cleveland (LPD-7)



Amphibious Assault Vehicles conduct a landing on the beach of Mubarak Military City, Egypt Sept. 15, 2005.

and the guided missile frigate USS Ingraham (FFG-61). While the multinational ground forces train and acquaint each other with tactics and

equipment to improve international military cooperation for the region, ships from ESG-1 will train with coalition maritime forces to protect the sea lanes of communications to secure the safety of international waters. In addition, ESG-1 is also training to engage international terrorists as it conducts Visit, Board, Search and Seizures (VBSSs), which are intended to detect, deter and deny international terrorist organizations (ITOs) use of the maritime environment. Along with the United States, other participating countries include, France Germany, Greece, Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. "It's

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important to demonstrate cooperation in this part of the world and the ability to fight when we have to..." said General John Abizaid, Commander of U.S. Central Command. The Magnitude of the exercise may parallel the magnitude of its benefits as participating nations in Bright Star have united together, at times in close quarters, with different cultures, but under one common goal against a common enemy, which is an enemy of peace, stability, and prosperity, as those are the themes of the exercise for all nations, and their troops involved.

Airman serves aboard USS Tarawa with company commander, A school instructor

Story by JO3 Adam Stapleton



Everyone's heard the phrases, "it's a small world" or "it's a small Navy;" and most sailors have worked with, or at least met again in passing, a shipmate from boot camp or A-school at some point during their Navy careers. However, very few have had the opportunity to learn from the same leaders and instructors they encountered in boot camp or A-school. Petty Officer Third Class Joshua Arroyos, an Aviation Boatswain's

Mate aboard Tarawa, is one of those few individuals. "It's definitely a strange situation to be in," says Arroyos, when asked what it's like being stationed on a ship along side not only his boot camp Recruit Division Commander (RDC), but his A-school instructor also. "Kind of makes me view the Navy as a large family." Like everyone, Arroyos's enlistment began in boot camp where he first

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encountered his RDC, a man who Arroyos says was feared by many of the recruits, Machinist Mate Chief Petty Officer Dave Hinds. "The boot camp experience is the basis for the rest of a sailor's career so you sometimes have to be hard when pushing recruits," says Hinds, who is now stationed aboard Tarawa. "You can tell which ones will be successful and those who just won't be able to adapt. I'm proud of Arroyos, he's one of the latter."

"At first I was like, 'man, this guy's serious, he doesn't like me,'" said the El Paso, Texas native when asked about his first impression of his RDC, Hinds. "Then I realized

that's how he had to be and was the same way with everyone. Now, when I see him in the passage ways on the ship it's no big deal. Chief Hinds is someone I can go to if I have any problems." If it hadn't been for the leadership Chief Hinds provided his recruits as a Navy RDC, Arroyos might not be in the Navy today. "Like most recruits, there was a time when Arroyos was ready to quit the Navy," said Hinds. "Fortunately he came to me and told me his concerns about missing his wife and his newborn daughter. I was able to help him find the resolve to stick things out and become the sailor he is today."

Arroyos's A-school instructor, yet another guide in his Navy experience, is also stationed aboard Tarawa. "Chief Hinds

did all the hard work, so when we got them they were ready to learn," said Aviation Boatswain's mate Chief Petty Officer Terrik King, who is also Arroyo's new Assistant Leading Chief Petty Officer. "He's a

real good guy, when I check onboard and saw that he had made third and had his Air Warfare pin. Seeing the pieces

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Sailor Recognized



Photo by PH2(AW) Larry Carlson.

PN3 Gina Pellegrino is congratulated by Lt. Joseph Klapiszewski, Admin Officer, having been advanced to Personnelman 3rd Class, Sept. 20th.

PLEASE HELP US....

We appreciate the care packages that you send to your Sailors and Marines aboard the USS Tarawa in helping to boost m o r a l ; however, please refrain from packing any type of styrofoam products in your packages. Styrofoam is becoming a big issue among the ship in the sense that we cannot dispose of such material. Waste products are separated by paper, plastic, and metal. They are then crushed and compressed into a machine where it is



bagged and tossed overboard. The problem with styrofoam is that after it has been compressed through the machines it eventually takes the form back into its original size leaving it unable to sink. If family members could please pack care packages with old newspaper or bubble wrap rather than styrofoam the waste disposal's job will go by much smoother. Thank you for your support and we highly appreciate your cooperation in concerns to this matter.

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come together and seeing a sailor that I taught advance, it's a good feeling being a part of that process." While Arroyos is still keeping his options open when it comes to the future, one thing's for sure, he's one of the rare sailors who's lucky enough to learn from his leaders and also work beside them in the fleet. "My long term goals are to eventually attend and graduate college, but my driving motivation for the work I do in the Navy is my family," says Arroyos. "I look forward to working with these men who are a major part of my success so far in the Navy."

Tarawa rewards its own...

ENLISTED SURFACE WARFARE

ACC(AW) PATTON
ABF1(AW) BELTON
AS1(AW) WRIGHT
SK1(AW) ORTEGA
ABH1(AW) HANSON
IT1 LONDON
OS2(SW) RICHARDSON
OS2(AW) FURR
ABH2(AW) TELLEZ
CS2 COUGHLIN
DT2 DEDIOS
HM2 DEJESUS
ABH3(AW) LITTLE
IT3 OGNITA
FC3 ROGERS
QM3 MARTIN
QM3 TAYLOR
OS3 PRATS
SH3 SEGURA
SH3 BUGAYONG
SHSN GALLARDO
SN HERNANDEZ
SN FOX

ENLISTED AVIATION WARFARE

CMDCM(SW) SCHANCHE
MMCM(SW) TOLENTINO
ITCM(SW) MURPHY
ETC(SW) RUSSERT
ETC(SW) PENLAND
HTC(SW) SUMILANG
JOC(SW) PUELLO
LNC(SW) WRIGHT
HTC(SW) SCHRITTER
BM1(SW) ROBINSON
HM1(SW) OLLENBERGER
IT2 (SW) KHEIRALLA
AC2 GUIDI
AS2 HALUAG
BM3(SW) MEDINA
ET3(SW) ROSS
AS3 ESTRADA
ABH3 ZAMORAA
ABHAN JACK
AN JACK
AN NGUYEN
LI3 ELENA VELAZQUEZ (SW)
PHAN KELLY MORGAN (SW)

NAVY COMMENDATION MEDAL

LT TILLERY
LT FERRER
CSCM(SW) LONTOC

NAVY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

LCDR HERSHMAN
BM1(SW) GEARING
IT2(SW) SHAWBELL
IC3(SW) GRAVES
ET3 BUCK
ET3 ROTHAM

FLAG LOC'S

AZ3 LYNCH

USS TARAWA PINS 17 NEW CHIEFS

Story by PH1(AW/SW) Marvin Harris

As friends and peers pinned on the long-awaited golden anchors on their collars, USS Tarawa's newest leaders stood straight and tall, beaming with pride and, for some, holding back the tears. Applauses, whistles and cheers filled the room as fellow shipmates welcomed 17 Sailors to the elite ranks of the chief petty officer at their pinning ceremony in Tarawa's medical ward, September 16th, 2005. These 17 sailors were now Chief Petty Officers, joining more than 5,000 Sailors worldwide who this week made the leap from utilities to khakis. All hailed to the newest



Photos by PH3(AW/SW) Spiker

members of the USS Tarawa "Backbone," as Big T operated off the coast of Egypt in support of Exercise Bright Star 2005. "I was excited, humbled, and thankful," said Chief Aerographer's Mate Thomas

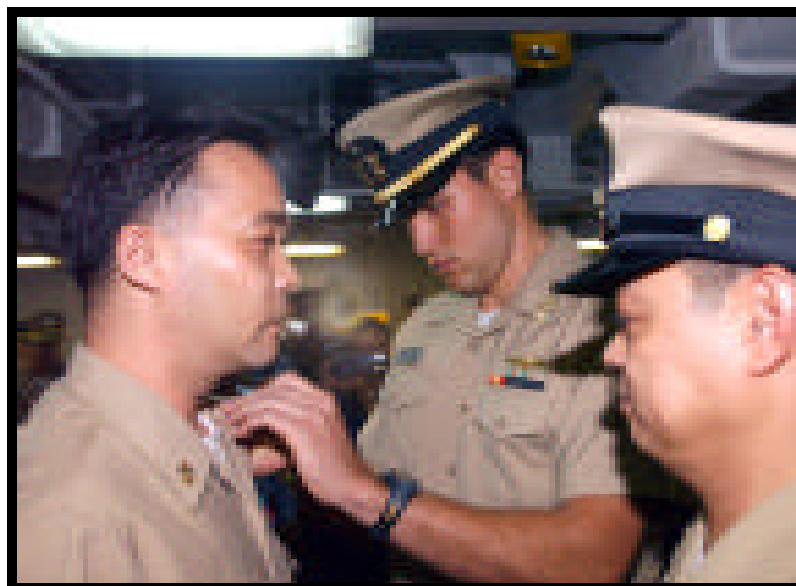
Newman. "Being called Chief is great, but it's still a bit surreal." The Sailors' transition from E-6 to E-7 began in July when the message announcing those selected for advancement was released. CMDCM Michael Schanche had the

honor of announcing our new chief petty officers' names over the ship's announcing system. From that time forward, the selectees went through a six-week process where they were tasked every day to do things that challenged them in a variety of ways. During this time, the new chiefs were motivated to grow and build camaraderie, professional attitude, management skills and mentoring responsibilities.

The ceremony marks the day when first class petty officers are recognized for their leadership and professional abilities, and accept new responsibilities and challenges. This tradition is unique to the Navy. "If I had to choose one special moment, it would be

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being piped aboard to officially join the ranks of my fellow Chiefs,” said Chief Patrick Newman. The senior enlisted brotherhood of the Chief Petty Officer is unique in the United States military. These enlisted leaders now wear the same uniforms as officers, and their responsibility is to manage their departments, as well as to “train” the junior officers placed in charge of them. The motto of the Navy CPO community is Honor, Courage and Commitment, and these khaki warriors have long been known aboard Tarawa as the “Backbone.” While family members could not attend this historic moment in the careers of their loved ones, be sure that a second celebration will occur with the new chiefs’ families upon Big T’s homecoming next year.

**HTC (SW/AW) Donald Eugene Gabriel Jr.****MMC (SW/AW) Salvador Javier Noble Jr****OSC (SW/AW) Timothy Griggs****MAC (SW/AW) Christopher A. Rupp****ABFC (AW/SW) Travis Smith****SKC (SW/AW) Rodney J. Ridenour****EMC (SW/AW) Godofredo V. Masangya Jr****AGC (AW/SW) Thomas Patrick Newman****EMC (SW/AW) Seraphine D. Mendoza****OSC (SW/AW) Cynthia Karen Gonzalez****HMC (FMF/PJ) Donald Meredith****ACC (AW) Frances Allyssa Medina****HMC (FMF) Christopher Roganti****SHC (SW/AW) Anthony C. Vitug****OSC (SW) Robert L. Gholson****HMC (SW) Neil Gamayon****ABHC (AW/SW/MTS) Terrik M. King**

IS1 (SW/AW) SARAH BROWNE



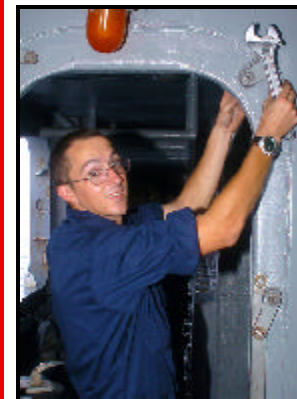
Service: **U.S.Navy**
Organization: **OZ Division**
Duty Title: **JIC LPO**
Hobbies: **WORKING OUT**
Favorite Duty Station: **This one, because of all the friendly people.**
Career Highlights: **The day I checked onboard "BIG T." It's the best command I have ever been to.**

AT2 (AW/SW) Cuong Phung



Service: **U.S. Navy**
Organization: **IM03**
Duty Title: **Aviation Electronic Technician**
Hobbies: **Playing basketball**
Favorite Duty Station: **This one. I learned the most while serving onboard here.**
Career Highlights: **Striking into the AT rate**

BM3 (SW) Jacob Beard



Service: **U.S. Navy**
Organization: **3rd Division**
Duty Title: **Boatswain's Mate**
Hobbies: **Work on Hot Rods**
Favorite Duty Station: **This one. I like the hours.**
Career Highlights: **Being the Helmsman.**

COOL PIC

Crew chief Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class Gary McGrath watches Aviation Electronics Technician Third Class Michael Fjell perform a Rescue Swimmer Search and Recovery (SAR) jump during a cast and recovery mission off the coast of Egypt.- **Photo by** PH2(AW) Larry Carlson

